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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: CHILD LABOR INFORMATION FOR TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT  
ACT (GSP) 2008 REPORT

REF: STATE 127448

¶1. Per reftel, this cable provides information on the child labor and the worst forms of child labor in Ethiopia and the Government of Ethiopia's (GOE's) efforts to address these problems for the period March 2008 to present.

#### ¶A. Laws and Regulations

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¶2. Ethiopia's constitution explicitly protects children against exploitive practices and work conditions that threaten their health, education, or well-being, and such protections are reflected in implementing laws and regulations. Specifically, by law children below the age of 14 are prohibited from working and children between the ages of 15 and 18 are barred from work that is hazardous to their health or developmental progress, including: dockside or warehouse work that involves heavy weight lifting; pulling or pushing of heavy items; work connected with electric power generation plants, transformers or transmission lines; underground work, such as in mines or quarries; grinding, cutting and welding of metals; work involving electrical machines to cut, split or shape wood; felling timber; and work that involves mixing of chemicals and elements which are known to be harmful and hazardous to health. Young workers are also prohibited from working more than 7 hours per day or from working late night shifts. Finally, Ethiopia has ratified all eight International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, including the ILO conventions on the Abolition of Forced Labor and on the Worst Forms of Child Labor; as above a list of "worst forms" has been developed in accordance with the terms of the latter convention.

¶3. Ethiopia has not passed any new child labor laws. The Ethiopian penal code since 1959 has expressly criminalized: slavery (five to 20 years imprisonment); child rape (not more than 15 years "rigorous" imprisonment); the trafficking of children for forced labor; sexual outrages "on" infants or young people (not more than five years "rigorous" imprisonment for sexual intercourse and other indecent acts) of minors between 15-18 year old (simple imprisonment); trafficking in minors for prostitution (rigorous imprisonment not more than five years (or longer with aggravating circumstances)) or for other purposes (rigorous imprisonment not more than three years); incest involving infants or young persons (rigorous imprisonment not more than ten years); abduction of minors (rigorous imprisonment not more than five years); the display, sale or distribution of pornography to children (fine or simple imprisonment not more than three months); and the maltreatment of minors (through beating, ill-treatment, neglect or "over-tasking") (imprisonment not less than one month). Concurrently with imprisonment, fines may also be levied with many of the foregoing violations. The minimum age for participation in the military is 18.

#### ¶B. Regulations for Implementation and Enforcement

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¶4. While the Ethiopian penal code provides for criminal penalties for child rights violations, investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions for child rights violations are rare. In coordination with the police and the MOJ, an internationally funded local NGO runs Child Protection Units (CPU's) in eleven Addis Ababa subcities to rescue and collect information on trafficked children to facilitate return to their families. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) is the lead agency for child social welfare and receives limited support from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCA). Cooperation, information sharing, and coordination between the two ministries has been poor. City and local governments also have under-resourced offices for dealing with social welfare cases. In January 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) established a Trafficking Control Department (TCD). Three research assistants coordinate with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Federal Police Command Post, the Immigration Authority, MOLSA and MOWCA to address child trafficking. As a start-up entity, the TCD has generated little information to date. In December, 2008, the TCD hosted an inter-ministerial panel discussion on child trafficking and child labor abuse issues.

#### ¶C. Social Programs

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¶5. The Addis Ababa Merkato CPU, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization for Prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children (OPFRIS)(an internationally funded local NGO) each provide shelter, medical care, counseling, and reintegration assistance to girls and boys victimized by trafficking. The police assist in the investigation of these cases, and in Dessie Town, Amhara region the police have

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replicated these social programs without international assistance.

¶6. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), whose membership consists predominantly of workers in government-owned factories, has focused one-third of its programming on forced child labor prevention, conducting media awareness (radio and television public service announcements) and labor law workshops for employers in Mekelle, Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa. CETU is conducting a study on the status of child coffee and tea plantation laborers. The initial findings indicate a high prevalence of forced child labor in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) and spurred CETU, MOLSA and the ILO to co-host policy drafting forums for a total of 90 trade union leaders in Bahir Dar and Mekele in October and November 2008. Their various draft policies have not been implemented.

#### ¶D. Comprehensive Policy

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¶7. Ethiopia has no comprehensive policy to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, although work has been done on a draft national action plan on child labor and First Lady Azeb Mesfin chairs a quarterly "pressure group" of state ministers designed to heighten senior government official awareness of child labor issues. Ethiopia's poverty reduction strategy is not targeted specifically to eliminate child labor, but Ethiopia's government is pursuing universal primary education as a millennium development goal. Currently, 91.7 percent of Ethiopian children have access to primary education. Ethiopian law does not state specifically that primary education is compulsory or free; however, students can go to government schools for free.

#### ¶E. Progress

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¶8. Child labor predominantly occurs in rural areas where children assist in subsistence farming. As more than eighty percent of Ethiopians engage in subsistence farming, the GOE perceives this as a development issue, not a child labor issue. This did not change during the year. The GOE has not done a child labor survey since 2001 and therefore has no recent data on the issue. Ethiopia's Central Statistics Agency is planning to undertake the next survey

in 2009. Though the government lacks the resources to provide material assistance to trafficking victims, joint police-NGO child victim identification and referral mechanisms operate in the capital. In the first eleven months in 2008, CPUs reunified 204 trafficked children with parents or relatives in Addis Ababa, placed 93 children in temporary shelters until their families were traced, and reunified 976 children with parents or relatives in other regions. The Social and Civil Affairs Department of the Addis Ababa city government reunified 46 children with families and placed 40 children in foster care in 2008.

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